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M VERA'S
Independent
JOURNAL

ECONOMICS

**"B...ER
ALL
GRAFT"**

**SAYS
CONSTRU-
CTION
BOSS**

INSIDE

NO. 31

March 8 1988

Atiu-Cook Islands

POLITICS

STATE OF THE PARTIES

**GEORGE
ELLIS:
- SORRY,
PEOPLE!**



George Ellis - CIP leader, former Manihiki MP and leading Rarotongan businessman.

**- CIP PRESIDENT WILL NOT
STAND FOR HOME ISLAND IN
NEXT ELECTION**

INSIDE

In a frank, exclusive interview with the JOURNAL, the man who was once one of the nation's most prominent Parliamentary personalities explains why he will not be standing in his home island constituency. "I am still firmly behind Geoffrey Henry's leadership," says George Ellis....SO..

THE LAW

**MORE
VANILLA**

**—DON'T
THREATEN US
LE HARTEL!**



**NORMAN
GEORGE
WARNING**

"DON'T CRY FOR ME MANIHIKI!"

THE SATIRICAL WEEKLY OF THE PACIFIC



a national publication.

P. O. ATIU C.I.S.

Cook Islands

The JOURNAL offers a weekly review of news, commentary and features at home and abroad from a Cook Is. and Pacific Regional standpoint.

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COVER STORY

We are probably heading for one of the most politicised years in the 23 year history of the modern Cook Islands. In spite of the new \$500 deposit required before those who fancy a shot at a seat in Nikao can enter the fray, a record number of candidates is widely predicted for the General Election.

Sadly, one of those who almost certainly will NOT be at the hustings starting gate is George Ellis. At least, it will be sad for those who remember with appreciation the intelligent and articulate contributions the ex-Manihiki MP made to Parliamentary debate in the late seventies and early eighties.

The JOURNAL is proud to present readers with another in-depth profile of one of our political leaders. In this issue, George Ellis explains why he has decided to opt out of the Manihiki contest.

Perhaps, however, of even greater significance is the CIP President's analysis of the contemporary Cook Islands social and economic scene.

For those who wish to move away from the often depressing round of "personality" politics, George Ellis offers a thought-provoking defense of the centrist politics that may well be the hallmark of a future Cook Islands Party government.

Editorial

At the big fights they always bring on the challenger first.

The ritual is time-honoured. He gets his fanfare, springs through the ropes into the centre of the ring, prances a bit in his corner, waves nervously selects a supporter or two to wave at ...and then waits....

And waits.

Meanwhile, back in the champeen's dressing room, the manager is calculating....timing the most telling psychological moment. The moment of face-down. The moment to destroy the dwindling confidence of the now lonely challenger shadow boxing out there in the empty ring.

Then...

In a blaze of publicity, trumpets blaring, bouncing, bubbling, aglow with super ego...

ENTER THE CHAMP!

Substitute Geoffrey Henry's hesitant, on-off challenge for the Parliamentary Heavyweight championship....

Substitute the Coalition's backstage calculations on how much patronage will buy off the fans....

Substitute the planners working out when to hit the opposition with a well-timed budget fanfare....

Substitute 24 bewildered constituencies wondering what precisely they're supposed to be cheering about....

Add in all the normal retinue of fixers, matchmakers, thugs, gangsters, punch-drunks, hoodlums, reporters and expense account molls..

And the forthcoming Cook Islands General Election of 1988 or 89 starts to take on the appearance of just what observers fear it will amount to.

Flop of the Year.

With neither unfit champ nor over-rated challenger offering anything to excite the ringside voter!

OPT OUT-----OR COPPED OUT?

SCENE:

A back street bar and diner just off the main drag in the dusty booze-rich boom town of Avarua City. The Tokerau Kid, a rich young dude from way up North is standing by the spittoon figurin' out an All-Blacks blind side move on the action replay.

A honky tonk stereo tinkles in the background. A painted taramea just in from the MOW typing pool Corral eyes up the company.

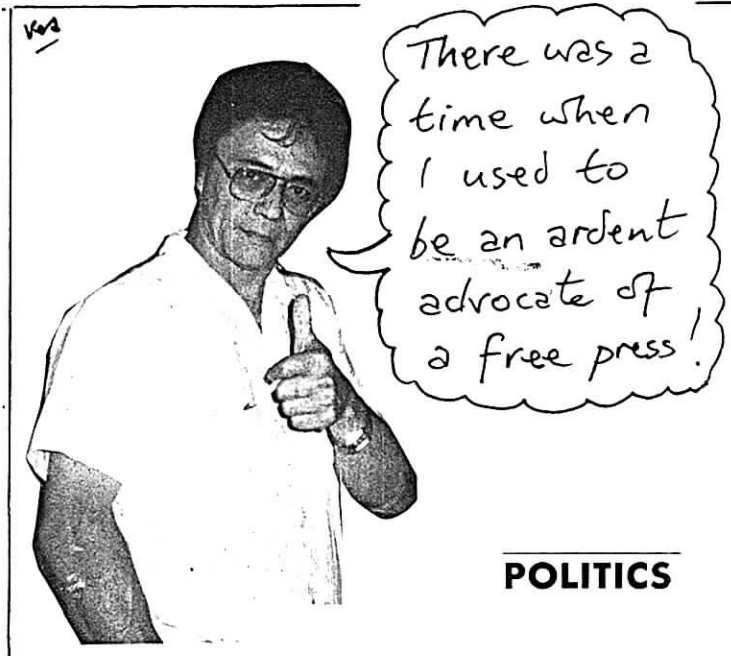
Suddenly, the bar-room door swings open. Silence (except for the distant voice of John Howson complaining that the ref never spotted a Frenchman offside).

ENTER: Big Bad Ben and sidekicks Pistols Poop and Nicky the Weeny.

Menacingly, he moves in on the Kid.

BBB: I hears yuh aint got the guts ter have a showdown, Tokerau Kid. Scared o' the lickin' yer got last time, boy?

PP & N. the W: Yeah, yeah. You tell him, Big Bad Ben.



POLITICS

BBB: Well, boy? You gonna face me like a man.

N.the W. & PP: Yer darn tootin' Big Bad Ben.

BBB: I give yer till sundown kid or I'll have the Copra Board run yer outa town.

T.KID: Afore yer come in this here bar, Big Bad Ben, deposit your wig with the sheriff.

EXEUNT BBB, PP & N. the W. to work out reply.

CUT TO: Sheriff Reuben's lock up just across the river.

BBB: You betta force him to have a showdown, Sheriff.

SR: That may not be a wise move, Big Bad.

DISSOLVE BACK TO SPITTOON

The Tokerau Kid smiles a deadly smile, sweeps the taramea up in his arms, spits twice, downs three fingers of lager at a single swallow and, with a twirl of his golden five shooter, puts a bullet straight through the French first five eighth.

NO, BUT SERIOUSLY—

There are quite a number of claimants to the CIs. throne of King Albert, lately vacated by Prince Tom.

Both the two "elder statesmen" aspirants, Drs. Robati and Maoate and the three younger "upstarts", Messrs Henry, Ingram and George have received a great deal of na-

tional (and even international) media attention.

For those, however, who prefer to evaluate a proven record rather than be hypnotised by publicity "hypes", a fourth name among the younger group used to be frequently mentioned.

To those, the announcement that former Manihiki

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FROM THE
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SORRY

MP George Ellis has decided not to contest his former constituency in the General Election will be a considerable disappointment.

In an earlier interview with the JOURNAL, the CIP leader Geoffrey Henry acknowledged that the absence of his former Parliamentary Deputy and Minister of Economic Development will be a blow to his hopes of putting before the electorate a line-up of talent to challenge the glittering quality of his 1983 cabinet.

The interview we had sought with George Ellis had taken time to set up.

On previous occasions, he had offered a smile and a "I'll let you know when I've made up my mind."

The JOURNAL interview which follows was granted just before we were told by Mr. George Ellis that he was going to give a final decision on his candidature to party leaders.

We cover the interview at length not only because of the short term interest in Mr. Ellis' future but also on account of the light it throws on the CIP moves away from the Albert Henry populist form of CIs. Islands socialism towards what CIP leader Geoffrey Henry described to us last year

as a "centrist social democratic" vision of CIs. government.

But, before commenting further, it would perhaps be best to meet the man himself and hear what he has to say on a wide range of topics, all of vital interest to current students of CIs. politics.

GEORGE ELLIS

44 years old, born on the N. Group atoll of Manihiki. Educated in the CIs. and NZ. B. Comm. Worked in Treasury as Accounts Clerk and later Senior Accounts Clerk 1968-1971. Chief Planning Officer 1972-73. General Manager of Tourist Authority 1973-4. MP for Manihiki (CIP) 1974-83. Lost seat in controversial circumstances following an unsuccessful appeal. The loss was the major shock of the late 1983 elections as he had been a senior minister in the short-lived CIP government of 1983.

Mr. Ellis Parliamentary specialist areas have been finance, tourism and economic planning and development.

Added to his special expertise in these areas, Mr. Ellis was distinguished as being one of the most talented bilingual debaters ever in Parliament.

Since 1978 he has been involved in a growing number of successful business and entrepreneurial ventures.

He has been President of the CIP since 1979 and, amidst many challenges to the leadership of Geof-

frey Henry, is regarded as a major Henry loyalist in party affairs.

NO SOFT OPTIONS

JOURNAL interview with
George Ellis.

J: Have you made up your mind about the next election and whether you are going to stand.

GE: I can tell you now that I shall be informing our party leader that I shall not be standing for Manihiki.

J: Was this a difficult decision to make?

GE: Of course, there are no soft options. Especially when it comes to making personal political decisions.

J: What finally made up your mind?

GE: The fact that my life and business interests are now firmly settled in Rarotonga. It would just

not be fair to offer myself to the people of Manihiki knowing that I would be unable to do them justice being based so far away from home.

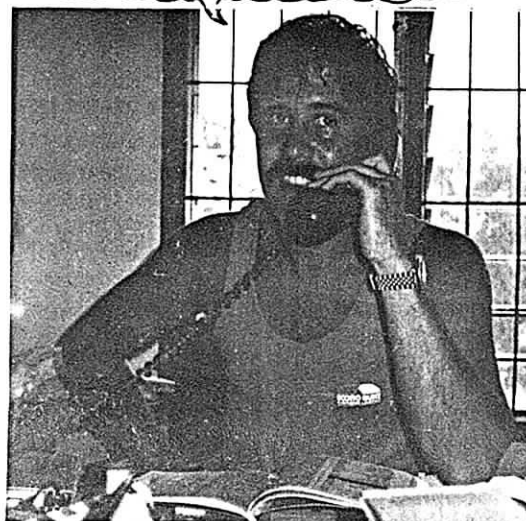
J: It wasn't just that you felt you couldn't beat Ben Toma (sitting Coalition member).

GE: Of course not. I'm confident that I would beat Ben Toma if I allowed my name to go forward. That is precisely why I owe to the Manihiki people a duty to represent them only if I am able to devote myself entirely to them. And with my base in Rarotonga so far from home, how could I do that?

J: Does your decision in any way reflect upon the party leadership of Geoffrey Henry?

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I was calling about that parcel you sent me, Big Jim..... it appears to be ticking!



VERA

GE: In no way at all. I am right behind Geoff's leadership. He is the best in country. My decision is for a whole variety of reasons, not just business.

J: Could you be said to be letting Manihiki down?

GE: No. The fortunes of politics have meant that I have had an altered set of priorities in the last few years. The Manihiki Committee now need a very good candidate who is going to get involved in all sorts of local committee work. I would not be able to do them justice.

J: Are you bitter about the last election?

GE: Oh no. As I said, a politician must learn to live with the fortunes of politics.

J: By our standards, you are now in big business. And succeeding. In fact, the brewery must be one of the most imaginative pieces of local entrepreneurship ever.

GE: I enjoy business. But there's a long way to go.

J: Have you found any difficulties being a big-time Maori businessman working in what is traditionally regarded as "white man's territory"?

GE: Let me put it this way. I can justify my role as a businessman and a Maori. But race doesn't enter into whether I'm successful or not. Just how good I might be is what counts. Not

the colour of the skin.

J: Nevertheless, you are among a minority. As a successful Maori businessman.

GE: Maybe. But it is wrong to stereotype CIs. groups. Everyone can break out of the mold. Maoris CAN be different. And they CAN be successful in business.

J: How would you explain your own business success?

GE: Any success I might have had is, I think, due to trying to work hard at management skills. The best bosses, I believe, are those who study and put into practice suitable management skills. My style of management is to try to get things done through people. Get them involved. Get people on your side.

J: So Maoris shouldn't be afraid of business or competing in the European's world.

GE: I think we have a lot to teach each other, Maoris and Europeans. The main thing is for each to understand the other side. That's why I listen a lot. Just to hear other points of view. It's a good way to learn.

J: You obviously don't see business as a non-Maori thing.

GE: Such ideas are complete hogwash. Commerce very often is no more than knowing the tricks of the trade and sticking to the rules. Maoris can learn the tri-

cks. Surely, in that sense, I can be regarded as a lesson model. I think that all our people need is lots of encouragement.

J: Is there a danger that by taking the stances you take you risk being written off as just a "white Maori" or "brown European"?

GE: I can't comment. As a Maori, I can say that we have a gut feeling in many situations that silence is the best approach. So, let others decide. I am quite capable, however, of justifying any stance I take.

J: Justifying or rationalising?

GE: My training was in business. I have learnt to balance things out... see both sides of a situation. This place is changing. We all have to adapt.

J: You say you are business-trained yet you also express concern

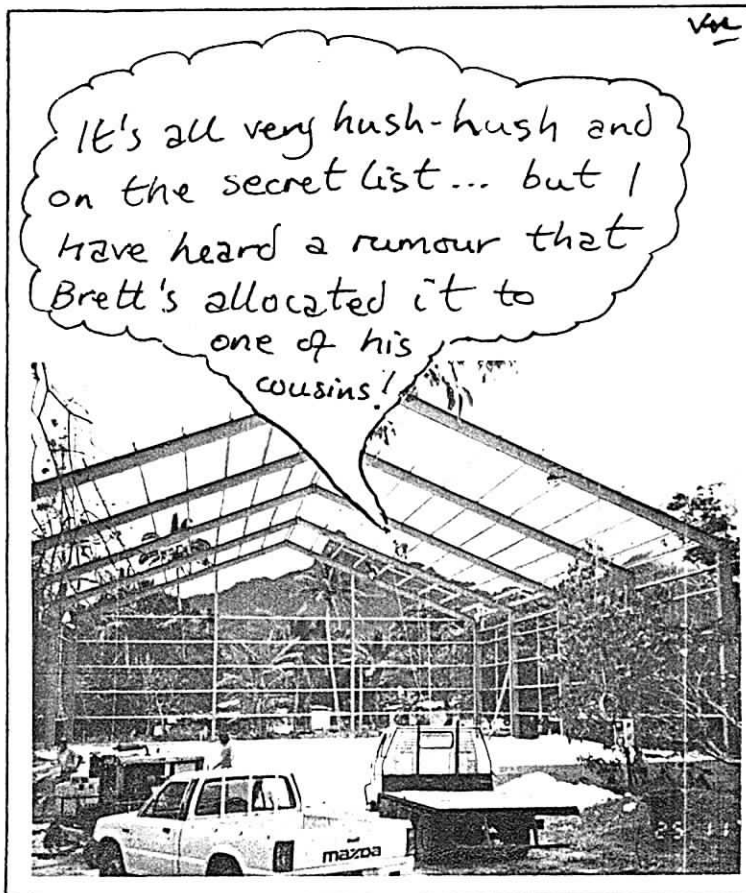
for the worker. As the country changes and business grows, do you foresee the arrival of industrial-type worker problems?

GE: There may be a growing danger of seeing the overseas type of disenfranchised worker becoming part of the Cook Is. scene. Yes.

J: Will we see the growth of unionism here, then?

GE: I hope we do not see the growth of unionism for unionism's sake. Where a union is seen to be the only way to ensure fairness for workers, then it will evolve accordingly. In those circumstances, I would support it. But unionism is not necessarily the only way of ensuring fairness for CIs. workers.

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J: You reject a purely socialist programme for our problems, then?

GE: I hate extremes. I hope they are not necessary in our country.

J: What alternative do you see?

GE: I hope to see emerging among the people an understanding that each side of the economy involves special interest. Workers must understand the special interests, in economic terms, of the employers. Likewise, the employer must become worker conscious and consumer conscious. At a national political level it must be clearly understood by government that if things are not efficient, it is the consumer, the little man who will suffer. If we can all work towards a common understanding, then we can start to define our problems rationally and begin a common sense approach to basic problems.

J: Do you agree that the so-called "spin-off" effect whereby capital is expected to filter down through all layers of our society is not working for the benefit of all?

GE: I would have to agree that the gap between the well-off and the rest of society appears to be increasing. But having made that observation, it is more inter-



CIP Opposition leader Geoffrey Henry. "Full support for his leadership," says George Ellis.

esting to see whether you can give the blame for this to anyone.

J: Presumably, you would apportion blame to government.

GE: That would be too simple an answer. For a start, the economic structure of the Cook Islands is "skewed". The producer section is not producing enough and we are heavily service oriented. To an extent, this is inevitable and so the problems are not simple to solve. But, having said that, the ways government have chosen to solve them for the last few years have been lacking in vision, to say the least.

J: Can you be more precise.

GE: Certainly. The whole fishing industry's wrecked.

J: And will a change of government improve things?

GE: It's a good start! But the serious issue is the need for clear long-term development planning. We must be geared to the efficient exploitation of our strengths. Our people, too, must face up realistically to our weaknesses in econo-

mic terms. That is to say, the level of development they want will not come out of our natural resources nor out of processing industries and so on. Take those away and what are we left with to pay for the social services? We are left with services we can provide others...that they are willing to pay for.

J: And, of course, by all that you mean tourism.

GE: Indeed. Tourism is our basic industry.

J: How can you, as one of the few political leaders highly educated in economic principles, claim that tourism is a primary industry? That seems to be a very dangerous premiss.

GE: I disagree. Tourism has to be our basic industry.

J: And by that, do you mean that we are to base our economic development upon

tourism?

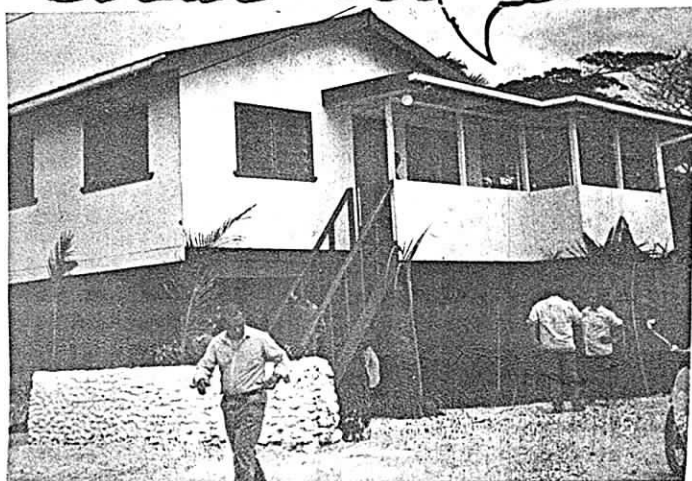
GE: Can you name me an alternative?

J: But tourism is not a natural resource. To ascribe to it the status of a primary sector activity is not only dangerous but in defiance of all the lessons of developing world economics?

GE: I think one must forget everything but the basic Cook Is. situation. That must be the starting point of all planning. Starting from that point, I do believe it is useful to treat tourism as a primary resource. Not only useful but essential. It is the way to make economic sense of our situation. By and large, the economic planners have never lived in a place like the Cook Is.

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Yes, it was quite a relief! We heard it was originally allocated to the Minister's one-legged, partially paralysed, bedridden, unemployed leprous sister-in-law. But she chose a pick-up instead!



FROM THE PREVIOUS PAGE..

J: But tourism is NOT a natural resource. You can't eat it. You can't mine it. It doesn't belong to anyone and so on. And, it is capable of disappearing overnight

GE: Perhaps it is best to regard it as an "intangible" product. But a product all the same...in the sense that it can be sold. To the overseas visitor, though, there is nothing "intangible" about the Cook Islands. There is what we may call a mystique. And that is very real for the visitor and he will pay to have it.

J: But in simple terms, we have an economy totally dependent upon the whims of the NZ dollar and the fluctuating fortunes of the overseas share market. The CIs. is not "needed" in the world tourism industry unless factors beyond the people's control fall into line.

GE: I am not saying that we devote all our investment priorities or incentive moves to the tourist industry. Obviously, the traditional primary industries like fishing need support. But where is that support to come from, if not tourism?

J: Where do you see tourism's major assistance to the people? The cash that they can generate?

GE: Not in the long term unless they can be encouraged to invest that cash wisely. No, I think the tourist industry's greatest help is in manpower development and training. Even commercial awareness. And, if you disagree, tell me the alternative? The Manpower Training Unit. What have they achieved? How



Today's George Ellis hallmark....a refreshing drop of ice cold Cook's Lager! (Made by the Ellis brewery!)

Have they helped the people. What the people need is an upward programme of personal development. Helping people to stand on their own feet.

J: Politically, you are starting to sound like the coalitionists.

GE: I think there's common agreement that tourism is a vitally important industry. And that our people have taken to it with more enthusiasm than they would probably offer to another type of industry. The problems we face would be there

no matter what industrial programme we had. If we had a major fishing or agriculture industry, there would still be the human problems. Tourism would be perhaps the one industry fitting the Polynesian ambience. It is an industry close to the heart of Polynesia because it is people oriented. But to support tourism is not the same as supporting the coalition government. As you suggest, it is a very delicate industry, and that is why it requires enormous management skills and intelligent operation by government. If the people are to develop. These skills and intelligent management are not in evidence today.

GE: Whatever the management, though, is it not very clear now that the real beneficiaries are not the mass of CIs. Maoris. There is a huge polarisation of society in terms

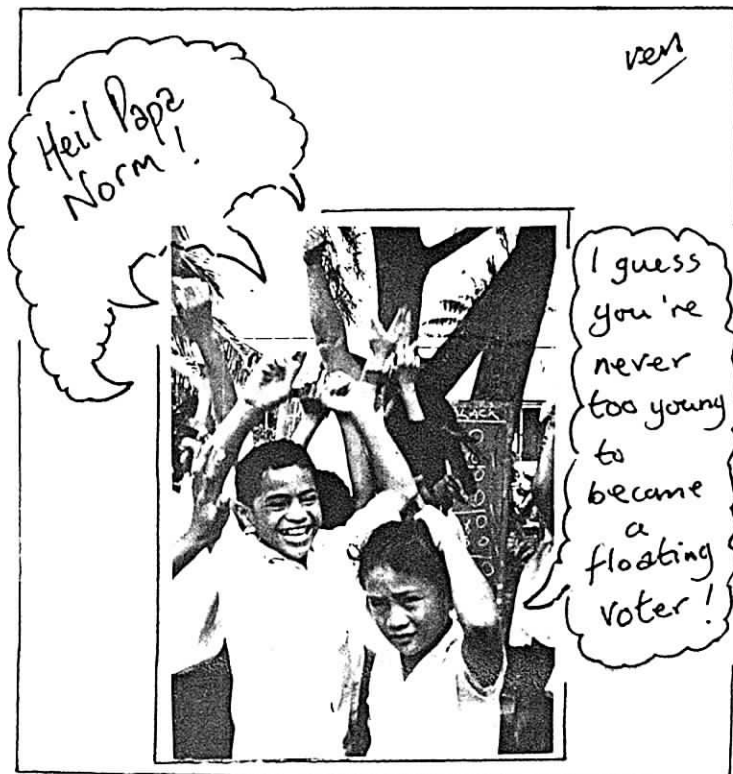
of wealth and racial tensions are beginning to surface at a serious level.

J: Racial tension will always exist. The control of it, like the control of all matters which, basically, stem from economic roots, is where politics comes in. It is the reason for the existence of politics. We have all the political controls we need to ensure a fair, peaceful society.

GE: So you would blame the present government for any current social crises rather than the business community.

J: The economic factor is what it is all about. Or rather, economic disparity. Now, no one, government or businessman has economic control. There are too many external factors involved. Nor does the businessman exer-

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GEORGE ELLIS

FROM THE PREVIOUS PAGE..

cise political control. So why bring the businessman into it. The guts of the problem is economic disparity and we possess the political controls. It is up to government to operate them. If they are not prepared to, the problems are then of their creation. Nobody is telling them not to.

J: That may be a bit unfair. After all, you businessmen enjoy a relatively "hands-off" eco-

nomic situation. And would not like it to change.

GE: Laissez-faire is not a bad thing and need not preclude a humane programme of welfare and so on... If it is combined with common sense and vision by all sectors.

J: So you see our problems as political in the end.

GE: I see no easy answers. Half the problems cannot be defined. They emerge slowly. That is why at all times, our people must be encouraged to face up to things

realistically. They must also be encouraged always to use their initiative in given situations. That will help them to cope. That and a competent, efficient government.

J: You seem to reflect the same sort of centrist philosophies dominating many former leftist parties such as the NZ and Australian Labour parties.

GE: If you want, a label... yes it is centrist.

J: Is that broadly the CIP official stance.

GE: I think CIP is a common sense middle of the road party.

J: Capitalism with a heart?

GE: Common sense!

J: Have you given up all thoughts of standing?

GE: That's not easy to answer. I cannot do

justice to Manihiki, I feel, for the reasons I have given. But, I would think carefully if I was invited to stand for a Rarotonga seat. I could serve a Rarotonga community well, if asked.

J: Any in particular.

GE: Obviously Tupapa is the logical place. But, as Papa Dan (Kamama) is doing a good job, it is not my place to oppose an excellent CIP candidate and sitting member.

J: What about Atiu!

GE: I don't think I have many deep ancestral ties to Atiu! You had better try asking me! Seriously, though, I am willing to help any committee needing my assistance.

J: Even as a candidate?

GE: Ah....we'll see!

Comment

by Editor David Lewis

The last time George Ellis and I faced off in an interview session of length was several years ago at the time of Coalition I.

Mr. Ellis was conducting the interview!

CIBNC at the time had a formal board policy of reflecting government's view that the installation of Coalition I was of paramount national interest. They were to be given a reasonable period of supportive grace in the interests of stability.

As editor of CI News at the time, I found it a policy which met widespread approval.

"Best thing that's ever happened, this coalition," quoted not-easy-to-please businessman Ross Hunter at the time when his remark

seemed to echo the feelings of most businessmen.

"I suppose they deserve a chance," was the worst comment I heard around town!

Consequently, editorial content consistently highlighted the achievements of government in that "honeymoon" period.

George was not happy, however.

"Your editing

may be clever with words, David," he declared at the then post 4 o'clock Mecca of the commercial mullahs-Cooks Corner, "but it is gutless!"

"If you won't write us the truth about what this coalition is up to, then vacate the chair!" he added.

"No hard feelings, though," he concluded, "your work

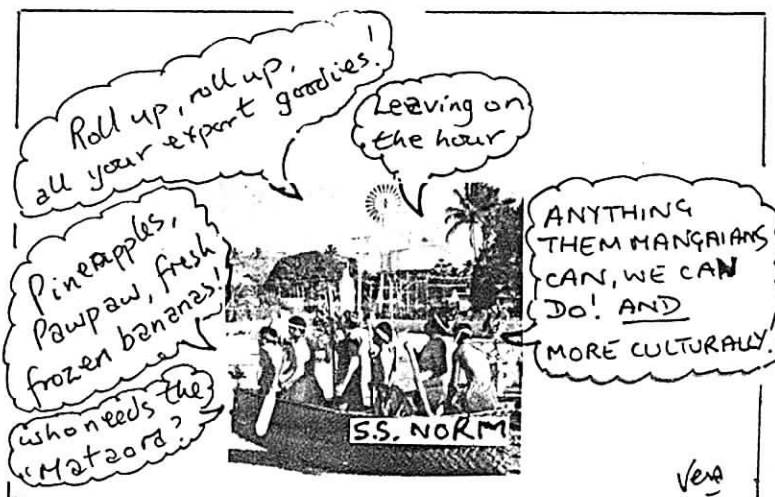
is very entertaining. But very gutless!"

Well, some of my best friends are Manihikians, so I countered,

"And when you were Minister, your government was the renowned sacker of out of line editors!"

"Ah," he rejoined, "that's what editors have to live with. That comes with the job. If you get sacked, you get sacked. But at least, you've stuck to your principles!"

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FROM THE
PREVIOUS
PAGE..

I mention the incident not only to indicate George Ellis' well-known frankness in speaking his mind but also for what it reveals of George Ellis' (and therefore a strong section of CIP) values and instinctive attitudes.

Lest anyone interpret the incident as an indication of rudeness or even inverted harassment of the press, it is probably also worth noting that George was generous enough to offer as a farewell, "if I didn't your work was any good, I wouldn't take the trouble to criticise it at a demanding level."

That too, is revealing.

George Frederick Ellis, to many, Mr. Cook Islands Role Model.

Europeans find him a comfortable Maori companion.

Maoris find him a trusted European taeake.

He appears to have assimilated all the best social graces from both races.

He smokes a pipe and chats University economics in Maori!

He can hold his own in debate with Vincent Ingram and Papa Tangaroa.

The appearance and the role model are misleading.

George Ellis is the embodiment of the universal liberal.

He transcends Maoriness and European-ness.

For, as our interview reveals, George Ellis is a non-ideological, benign, up-market, optimistic social democrat.

From our earlier interview with Geoffrey Henry, it seems clear that this also is a public image which CIP will hope to cultivate as an election-winning stance.

With front-men such as the immensely likeable President George Ellis, they will sew up a goodly portion of the silk collar vote with it.

With their working alliance with the grass roots old-style CIP's in several constituencies, they could be on to an election winner.

The CIP probably have to move into the centre and even to its right to capture 13 plus seats. The more they do, the more they reject their party roots. And the more likely they will be to widen the jaws of the economic disparity George Ellis speaks of as the legacy of Coalition.

Liberals are not to be trusted. Tom and his Marine Corps of Itinerant Right Wing Rippers-Off are much more trustworthy.

They rip you off face to face!

George Ellis and his people are too nice to rip you off. They just quietly oil the machine that of ever escalating inflation, rampaging cost of living indexes and dwindling money supplies.

George is extremely gutful and first class company.

He is also one of the most dangerous men

Open to all

AML



AFTER WORK
WEEK-ENDS
TONIGHT

WELCOME

around!

Social democrats are like that!

Quips apart, however, George Ellis' interview is an important one, we feel.

Readers should by now be in a position to detect the strands of ideology running through our different party political line-ups.

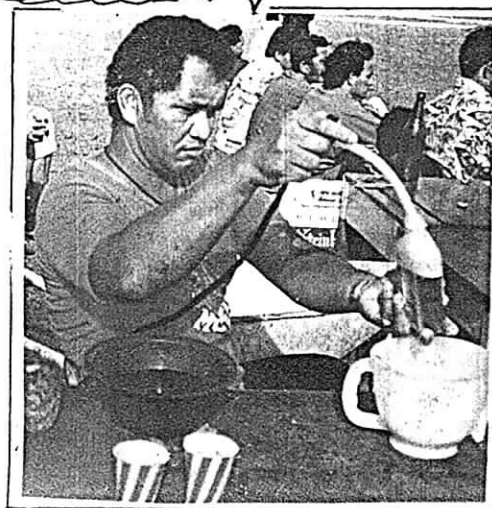
George Ellis clearly articul-

ates what will certainly reflect the substance of CIP ideology in the next election viz: there's nothing much basically wrong with the direction of our economy that some smart new management moves won't put right ...combined with a bit of stick waving at slack public servants.

Over to you!

You're the voter.

For a pipe-smoking Manihikian CIP politician business executive, he makes quite a decent drop of brew!



Ves.

ECONOMICS

VANILLA

NORMAN
GEORGE

WARNS LEHARTEL

Don't be fooled," said a supposedly neutral observer of the development of the Vanilla controversy/scandal/fracas/sensation etc, "Norman isn't telling all. He's been in it for years. Is he trying to get us to believe he's only just found our Lehartel's a possible rogue?"

The subject of discussion was a sensational exclusive press release given the JOURNAL by the Atiu Office in Rarotonga.

In the release, Foreign Affairs Minister Norman George lambasts Tahitian entrepreneur Charles Lehartel in the name of protector of Atiuan landowners' rights.

Supporters of Norman George conspiracy theories propose that Mr. George is being hypocritical; that he has probably tipped off Lehartel that there will be a level of official flak to be flown through; and that (don't worry, Charlie) the Vanilla Project will materi-

alise safe and sound and ready to slot in alongside Mr. George and Mr. Paratainga's plans for re-election on their economic development and employment platforms...for which Ledarco and the Atiu Development Corporation (ADC) are to provide the framework.

In fact, proclaim detractors, Mr. George is probably only too happy to get rid of troublesome landowners who have the irritating habit of demanding that things be done in the name of some papa'a law or other!

Without them, the project will go ahead with a pack of tame landowners who have no knowledge of how they will be used to serve the members' political purposes and M. Lehartel's commercial purposes.

Quite a conspiracy.

Time to look at the press release.

Comment later!

RELEASE FOR THE ATIU JOURNAL

In an exclusive release delivered to the JOURNAL from the Atiu Office, Rarotonga, Minister Norman George issued a warning to Tahitian businessman Charles Lehartel.

The Atiu MP stated, "My people will not be threatened, conned or forced to do things against their will. I am elected to give my people sound advice."

He further stated, "What the Vanilla Committee members did by signing the Lease Agreement is wrong and contrary to my advice. They were apparently told, that after they sign the original lease documents, the major changes we proposed will then be incorporated."

"If this is the case, then it is quite wrong and most unprofessional."

"I am pleased that a number of local solicitors who have been asked to wi-

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ORANA



TERAI MANEA

TRADITIONAL

ATIU

(PROP. terupe kelly putiarc)

CREATIVE ARTS

THE COOK ISLANDS

terai manea

NORMAN GEORGE WARNING

FROM THE
PREVIOUS
PAGE..

tness the documents have refused on professional grounds. The Court and our Leases Approval Committee will not approve this type of lease and I will see to it that they don't, by ensuring that the landowners are legally represented.

"I am pleased to see my friend Vincent Ingram volunteering his services for some of the landowners."

The release notes that the Vanilla Committee members were apparently rushed to a meeting with Lehartel without being given the opportunity to discuss the matter with Minister George first.

The release concludes by refuting the report given in the JOURNAL last week that the Minister and Mr. Tepou Boaza failed to meet the committee. The release states that they waited all afternoon for the Committee but the Committee did not turn up.

(NB: The report was given to us by an eye-witness and was reported as such. However, the JOURNAL regrets that the report may have given the impression that the Minister and his aide failed to meet pre-arranged appointments. It was not our intention to convey that impression ED.)

Comment

The conspiracy theory has the advantage of all conspiracy theories.

It can't be disproved. If it could be, it wouldn't qualify as a conspiracy any more.

So, we'll leave the conspiracy to those who believe it. But we will note that, if true, it reveals a whole new Norman George—a master machiaevellean plot choreographer weaving intricate ballets of political chicanery the likes of which not even Norman's worst enemy had suspected him capable.

Our editorial view tends to suggest that the conspiracy theory is pure fantasy.

The facts are that a story was published last week in the JOURNAL which, in Albert or Tom's day would have got the editor, reporter, printer, collator and tea-girl professionally fried, boiled, roasted, diced and served up at the next Upstairs morning tea!

Instead, the JOURNAL received a courteous, professionally presented release including a repriman. (Which we do not accept!)

In the release, a government colleague is told he was wrong, an overseas investor is warned and accused of unprofessionalism, and, in a wisely sophisticated piece of political one-upmanship, a bit-

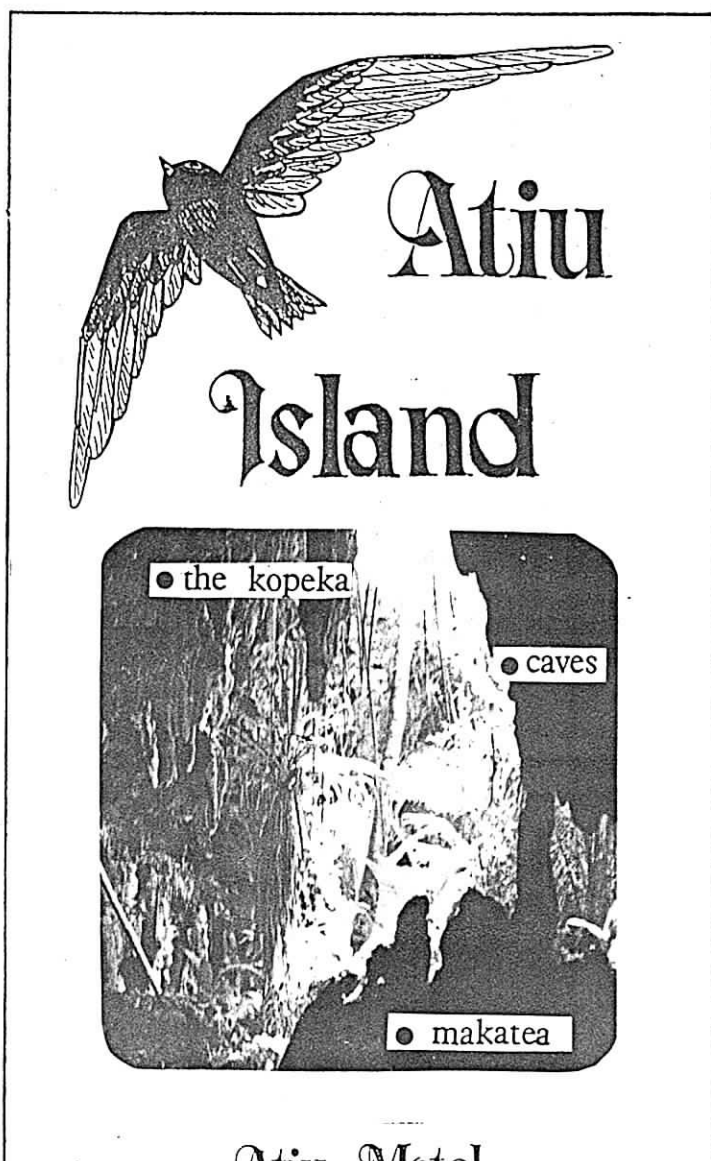
ter opponent is treated with courtesy and generosity.

Certainly, one detects politics at work..but, it is politics which protects those landowners on Atiu who dema-

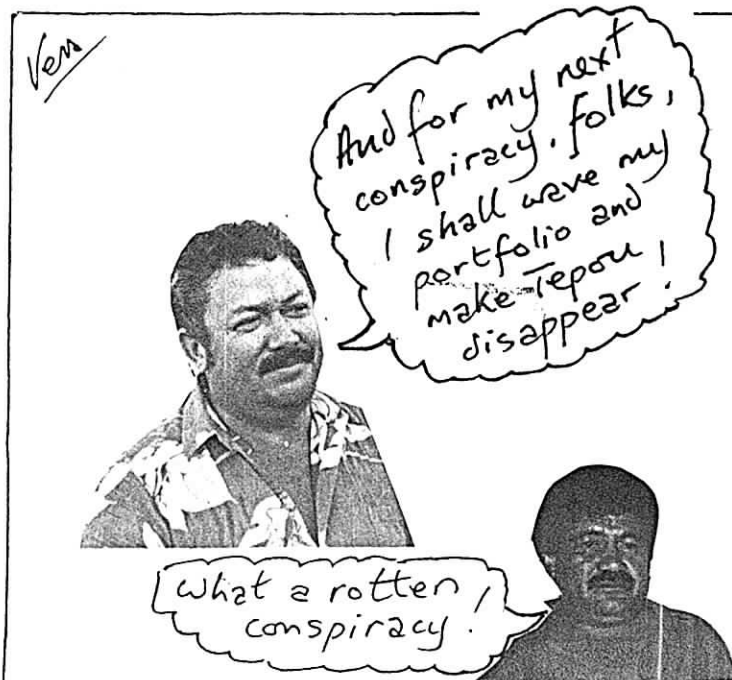
ned the strong support of their elected MP.

The story took us three weeks

SEE THE NEXT PAGE



Atiu Motel



FROM THE PREVIOUS PAGE..

to prepare. It cost us a lot of money we can't afford. It was, to the best of our ability, professionally done.

Mr. George, who (be honest, folks) must have been livid at its publication, has rejected a captive response through CIBNC but has returned the professionalism.

Let it be known, too, that both Mr. Ingram and Mr.

Henry have at various times indicated that they also are prepared to offer a professional relationship to any writer who can submit professional articles.

To that extent, we take the willingness of every political figure we have approached to talk to us as a compliment.

Those who, we know, believe that this paper

is a campaign vehicle for Mr. George have no conception of the gulf which separates the political philosophy of Mr. George and that of the editorial policy of the JOURNAL.

It must be admitted, though, that Mr. George does manage to close the gap from time to time!

The Vanilla saga and the increasingly allied ELI and ADC story will continue.

All sides will be adequately given to readers in the lead up to another High Court session in May.

Meanwhile, it is hoped that the coming weeks will bring a visit to Atiu from Mr. Ingram on behalf of some landowners still uncertain of matters.

It is also hoped that Mr. Paratainga's next visit might coincide with the MP's awareness that this paper exists to serve his needs as much as those of his growing number of opponents!

A HARD DAVE'S FIGHT

Liverpool-raised Rarotonga businessman Dave Brown rarely fronts up in print.

The achievements both locally and overseas of his Mainline Brown Construction Company have been widely publicised (deservedly, by general agreement) but the forthright Managing Director has usually kept himself out of the headlines.

For this reason, as well as welcoming a fairly rare chance to interview a strategic figure on the booming Rarotonga business scene,

the JOURNAL was especially pleased when Mr. Brown consented to give us a lengthy and frank interview on the expanding and potentially risky construction industry - an enterprise renowned worldwide as the business which contains the greatest number of seeds for corruption.

Initially, however, we concentrated upon a story which has been thrust in front of us almost

SEE THE NEXT PAGE

THAT HOUSE

\$147000!

(and it was too much!!)



Dave Brown was most definitely not pleased!

"The ones who were trying to use you to set me up or Norman George up for accusations of corruption (and I know who they were) were lucky. If you had printed that rubbish, I'd have had you all in court for a minimum of a hundred grand."

The contractor went on to explain.

"Sure we tendered. But our tender was too high."

He went on to describe the technicalities of construction tendering.

"I don't necessarily think that we would have been higher in the long run but it was up to Norman."

The tender from Mainline Brown was \$147,610 and was turned down as too expensive!

SEE ACCOMPANYING STORY.

**FROM THE
PREVIOUS
PAGE..**

since our opening issue.

The story that won't go away.

The story of the Norman George house in Titikaveka.

We thought it had been put to rest but even our fairly conclusive report did not squash speculation.

"I don't believe your figures," said one Rarotonga businessman. "And I don't believe there wasn't something fishy going on."

We put it to Dave Brown.

J: What about the famous house, then?

DB: Yes. I've been wanting to have that out. What I know is that the Minister called me in after reports of accusations alleging I'd bribed him.

J: And your reaction?

DB: If it was ever published, I'd sue. We are not in the practice of bribing.

J: What about seeking political influence?

DB: Never in my life have I used the political system. We don't need it in our company. I've been around a long time and I don't need to get in to corrupt practices or playing politics.

J: How would you describe your approach?

DB: Simple. I look after my boys.

That's my best PR. I've earned my PR.

J: There were rumours that you and Minister George came to agreements that involved the Development Bank contract as also various concessions involving legislation covering import duties on materials.

DB: Yes. I've heard all sorts of rubbish and I can guess where the rumours started. Look. On the Development Bank, we proposed to buy the land. Then we would do a joint venture. We did a full set of drawings. But because of external pressures, the project was shelved after clearing the site.

J: And who bore all the costs?

DB: We did. Fencing and clearing.

J: Why didn't you sue?

DB: There was no point. It would have been futile.

J: But it could be said you had government over a barrel in terms of the new proposal?

J: No way. John Short Construction were given the chance to submit tenders. But they didn't. And, if things were going to go ahead, government at the least had a reasonable obligation to us, considering they'd started with us. Certainly we regarded the prolonged correspondence as basically a form of legal contract. There would have been legal pro-

ceedings had we not been assigned. 80,000 dollars of design fees were involved. But over a barrel? No. The approval of the Development Bank was needed to do the drawings. They could have cancelled the whole thing and paid costs.

J: Presumably, it was the Development Bank which established in some people's minds a connection with Norman George?

DB: Norman wasn't on the Development Bank at that stage so the suggestion is ridiculous. We earned our contract.

J: What contact did you in fact have with Mr. George?

DB: One negotiation took place. But the whole thing was resurrected because of the house business. And I'm sick of the allegations about that house.

J: What's the truth, then about the house?

DB: We quoted. We are a construction company

and do make quotes on constructions! But our quote was turned down.

J: What was your quote?

DB: I'll get it for you. (SEARCH) There, see for yourself. \$147,610.

J: Why was it turned down?

DB: It wasn't acceptable. Don't forget he can do few things cheap. He has a brother that can do electrics and so on. I know he thought we were high. I believe he had to get a sizeable loan from National Bank to establish the mortgage.

J: Contracts and tendering apart, what's your opinion of the house value? Norman says about \$150,000. Others say no way. It has to cost much more.

DB: The others are talking rubbish. It's

SEE THE NEXT PAGE

For this one, we've accepted a offer from the government of Bangla Desh. It's to be converted into a luxury hotel or a detention centre for especially awkward political prisoners. Up to them.



FROM THE
PREVIOUS
PAGE..

1100 square feet. It's not a bad house, of course. But there's an awful lot of luxury missing. Norman's reckoning seems about right.

J: And there were no deals, then?

DB: How on earth could there be? He turned us down. And, anyway, the connection our company has with Vincent Ingram (at the time a consultant on retainer) would mean that Norman George would have to be out of his mind to get involved in any form of graft with company a major political rival is representing. And, after all, I've been in business for 14 years. I stay aloof from politics. I wouldn't risk my company.

J: There is a suggestion that you might be feeling the pinch due to competition from big time NZ construction companies in the country for the first time?

DB: I can guess where you got that from, too! No. If we're talking about Fletchers, Hawkins. It's the best thing that's ever happened to the industry.

J: Can you compete?

DB: We beat Hawkins in Auckland by \$1700.

J: Why is it then that you say you might be leaving? That's a serious step for a local company.

DB: It is. But

we're not crying unfair overseas competition. If we moved, it would be because of political pressures.

J: Can you explain?

DB: We use no political influence, as I've said. But there is another local company we would not be alone in believing is in a position to extract political advantage.

J: Can you be precise?

DB: I can't accuse, of course. All I can say is, look at it from our point of view. There's Tui on every bloody committee in town. (Tuingariki Short). He's a major political figure. And he's on the board of a big local rival. I'm not prepared to accuse anyone but I will say that if my company feels it is in any way disadvantaged because of politics, we will consider it grounds for pulling out. And the Cook Islands will be the loser.

J: The construction industry is renowned world wide as having great potential for big money corruption. What's your estimation of the CIs. scene as far as graft is concerned?

DB: Our scene? Fairly good. Don't forget, we're very small. There's really "!!!!!!"-all corruption. Tenders ARE fairly regular and you musn't forget that a lot is done by MOW through aid.

J: What does exist, if anything?

DB: I haven't seen it. I'm not alone in thinking



Tui Short - executive in the JSC Construction Company, local rivals to Mainline Brown.

there's some political pressures going on. I don't know about this "Avarua Master Plan Committee".

J: So you think that by and large the industry's sound.

DB: I've got no real hang-ups. Except the unfair use of politics. The presence of Fletcher's is to the local industry's advantage. They know how to cost and they are more than aware of their entitlement out of a commercial contract. From our point of view, too, we've seen JSC (John Short Construction) overhedge rocket up.

J: Can you give us a layman's run-

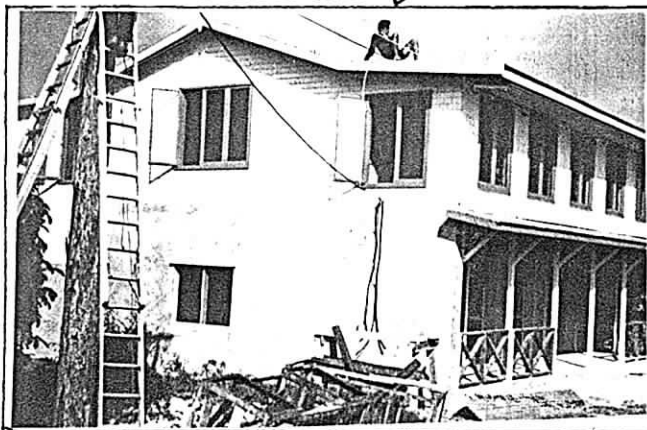
down on how the industry operates.

DB: Well, we do basically three types of contract. There's the domestic contract - a handshake situation. There are the semi-commercial jobs - a bit more formal but still nice and friendly. Then there's the pure commercial contract. Recognised sets of rules. Strict compliance all round. Down to the last nut.

J: And what are Mainline's future plans.

DB: We got a lot of ideas. We're getting into our own development programmes. Shops and offices. We'd like to move some more into the upgraded concrete block business, too. The main thing, though is to keep staying on an equivalent footing with our competitors. We can do it, too. Even Fletchers. But, if there's politics going on and getting in our way, we'll be off!

Graft? Corruption? Influence peddling? Political back-handers? Vested interest? Underhand deals? Special favours? NEVER HEARD OF THEM!!



IT'S GOATS AWARENESS WEEK, FOLKS

HAVE YOU GOT GOATS?



GOATS may have been introduced to the Cook Islands by consenting adult Foreign Ministers. ABOVE: A registered Foreign Minister about to perform an unnatural act.

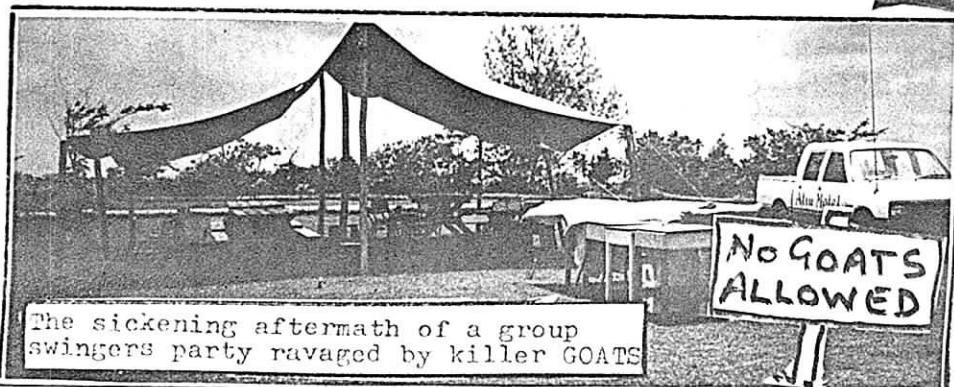
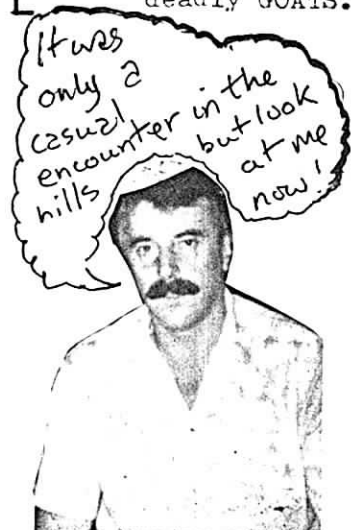
REMEMBER: There is no such thing as "Safe" GOATS. Prominent medical authorities recommend total avoidance of GOATS. Note: the large rubber sheath on the Foreign Minister's left leg (above) is, contrary to popular belief, no guarantee against deadly GOATS.



This man is deeply troubled. He is asking himself the question that all Cook Islanders are now forced to face... have I got GOATS.

The urgency of this national dilemma was highlighted this week by the twin confessions of PM Dr. P. Robati and HRH Sir T. Tangarua that they had both had GOATS for years.

BELOW: The nightmarish end of a GOATS victim.



SPORT



OVER HERE

BY

OWEN LEWIS

European athletics goes indoors in the opening months of each year.

Since the early and mid-seventies, the indoor season has taken on an importance which has begun to rival the summer outdoor season.

With the season only a few weeks old came the first crop of new records, both European and world.

The women world indoor 800m record fell to East Germany's Christina Wachtel with a 1min 56.40 clocking in Vienna.

This knocked over a second and a half off her own record set in Turin a week earlier.

Another East German woman in top form at the Vienna

SEE THE NEXT PAGE

Tae Kwon-Do



Art and Philosophy

(Maorikava Tere, N.Z.-based Atiuian Tai Kwon Do expert continues his review of the sport by commenting on some of the deeper aspects of the martial art rapidly gaining popularity on Atiu)

It takes a long time to fully understand the "true meaning" of the art and the "total" student must conquer the physical, spiritual, mental and emotional aspects of being a student before he even attempts to become an instructor.

It is not just continual physical exercise and it requires total and sincere dedication.

To become truly part of the Art of Tai Kwon-Do

part of the Art of Tai Kwon-Do, one must place him

or herself beyond political and personal considerations and try to get along with people who belong to different organisations.

After all, Tai Kwon-Do is an art which was developed to bring harmony, justice and peace not just to students of the art but to people of all nations, regardless of race, religion, sex or political beliefs.

(to be continued)



the quorums

an everyday tale of political folk

t r o p o



**FROM THE
PREVIOUS
PAGE..**

meeting two weeks ago was Heike Dreschler who long jumped a remarkable 7.37m to beat her own New York set record a few days before by 5cm.

This year's Tokyo marathon in late February was won by 24 year old Ethiopian star Abebe Mekonnen in a super fast 2hr.33s, 9s ahead of 1984 and 1986 winner, Jimi Ikangaa of Tanzania.

Mekonnen, winner of the 1987 Paris marathon, led from start to finish, dropping Australian Rob de Castella and East German Joerg Peter at the 39K mark.

Of local interest was a disappointing run by SPG champion Alain Lazare, representing France, who dropped out after 30K with a leg injury.

Forty year old former world heavyweight champion George Foreman of the USA chalked up his 7th successive victory in a comeback campaign which saw him last month fighting for the first time in the series back in the States.

Foreman beat Italian non-ranker Guido Trane by TKO in the 5th round.

The winner netted \$US20,000 for the fight and will enter the ring again this week against Swede Anders Ecklund.

Nearer to home, the JOURNAL has had news of interest to the keen group of local Bodybuilders.

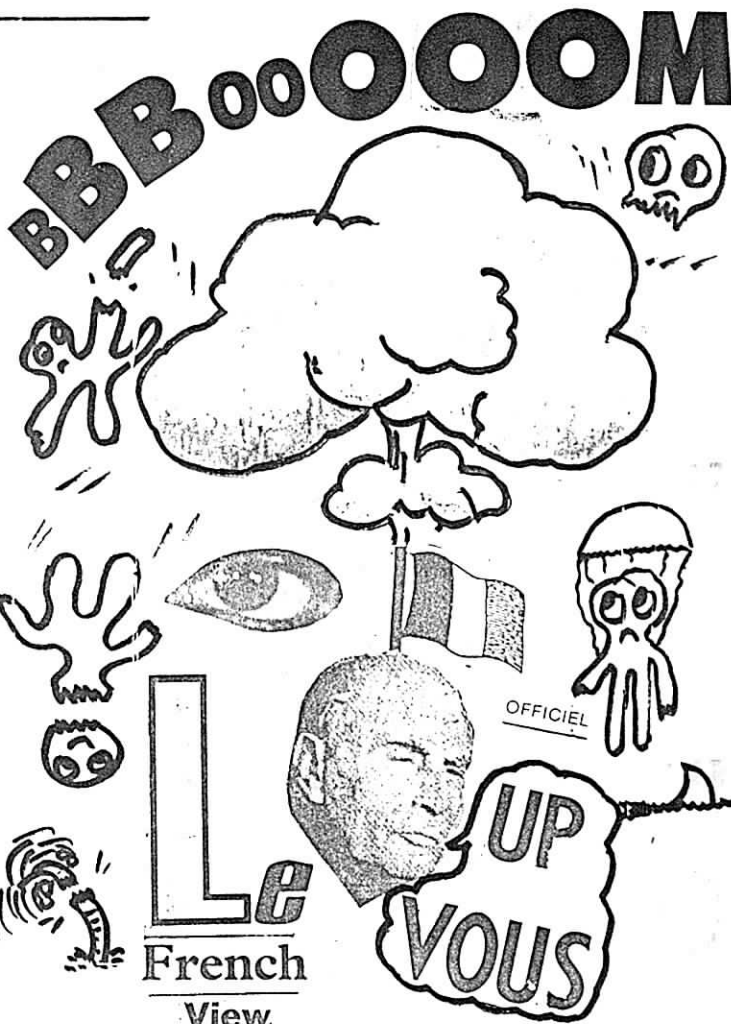
The battle for international recognition between the IBBF and WABBA federations continues unabated in neighbouring Tahiti.

Latest move to capture control of the sport comes from the WABBA affiliated FCPF which has announced that in June it will be staging Tahiti's biggest yet international as part of what it describes as "The 2nd. International South Pacific Body-Building Championships".

Up for grabs in Papeete will be the following titles:

Mr. France (Overseas); Miss France (Overseas); Mr. South Pacific; Miss South Pacific; Mr. Polynesia; Miss Polynesia; Mr. Tahiti; Miss Tahiti; Mr. Mururoa; Mr. Muscle; Best Poser.

LIVING



Well, je never did!

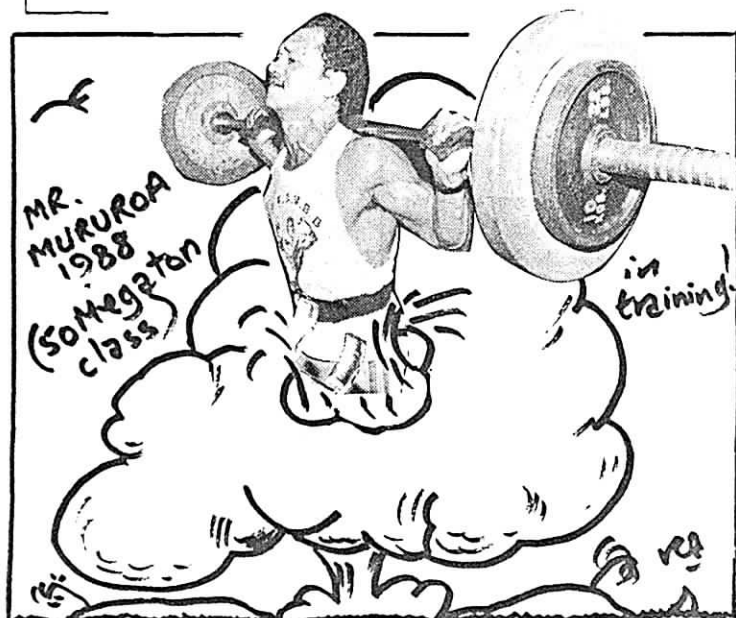
Je gets wind of le existence of le sort de bloke what je wish. je could have alongside moi dans les forth-coming elections when je pits mon all up aga-inst le appall-ingly devious Jacques le Sheer Crap.

Je refers, of course, to le tres outstanding entrepreneur dans les maisons de Ouragon Relief, mon nouveau candidate pour l'Ordre du Frog d'Or premier class Nobel Transport Prize Laureate, Grand Jacques le Duc de Rutaki.

Un fellow apres mon own coeur who knows vous don't go flasking round les Maisons de Relief to any vieux riff-raff who turns up sur votre doorstep avec un bag de cement et un sob story.

Il est certaine-ment premier sur le list pour un brand new Learjet et un holiday villa sur le lagon dans Mururoa et un free morceau de nookie any time il drops in at le Palais....apres je have disposed of le revolting Sheer Crap dans April.

Bon sur vous, Grand Jacques.
Le Grand Frog.



KER P O O O W!

THE JOURNAL

& THE (Last) WORD



STOP PRESS

Justice Dept.
Rarotonga.

Dear Sir,
I write to ask for a bit of your time and space in the JOURNAL so that I can briefly explain my position as a former Committee Member of the Vanilla Incorporation and one of the negotiators, together with Mr. Ingram and others in attempting to arrive at a fair, just and reasonable conclusion on the terms and conditions of two very important documents concerning the Project.

The documents are, firstly, the agreement to enter into a lease and, secondly, the Deed of Lease itself.

The contents of these documents are very difficult for an ordinary layman to understand in terms of meaning and effect and which, sadly, never reached their final stage in readiness for execution for two reasons.

Firstly, Mr. Charles Lehartel or Ledarco Ltd. failed to produce the document to the satisfaction of the Com-

mittee, the document being that concluded at a meeting we held in Rarotonga on 13th July 1984.

Secondly, no further negotiation has been held since 1985 except (according to the grapevine) that Mr. Lehartel and his delegation went to Atiu direct on a number of unknown occasions to have the committee members in Atiu agree to sign the Draft Deed of Lease, a lease which has not been yet finalised nor agreed to by both parties.

Such trips were without the prior knowledge or consultation with Mr. Ingram and/or with some of the negotiating representatives in Rarotonga.

Perhaps one might ask why, all of a sudden, I write this.

Firstly, out of the 1984 Committee members appointed by the Court on 21 March 1984 I, together with Mr. M. Paratainga (now MP) were the only active members involved in the negotiations with Mr. Lehartel and his

then lawyer Mr. Trevor Clarke concerning the terms and conditions of the two documents referred to above.

Although I was at the meeting held at Clarke's Office on 19 February 1988, I was only there for about ½ an hour at the most because it was revealed to me by a minute of a meeting held in Atiu on 4 February 1988 that I was no longer or included in the 1988 Committee.

Secondly, I was asked and selected by the meeting of the landowners held at Atiu on 2 March 1984 to be one of the Committee members, confirmed by appointment of the court on March 21 1984.

I wish this 1988 committee all the best not because of the so-called multi-million dollar project at their disposal but mainly to secure whatever protection measures they may decide reasonable and appropriate for our heritage and resource - land.

Such protection measures are not to have the rich

and the poor made poorer or for political gain or other gain but, more importantly, so that the interests of the landowners, entrusted to the committee, are adequately safeguarded and protected.

Lastly, but not least, I want it known to my Atiu people wherever they are that, before "cleaning my hands" (which it is not my wish to do but that of the landowners, apparently) I state that since the commencement of the project I WAS NEVER AT ANY STAGE WHATSOEVER part of an agreement, either verbal or written or by conduct or implication that approved the Draft DEED (6 in all) for execution, although, I must admit, I support the principles behind the project.

Yours sincerely,
Noapili Teareā,
1984 Committee Member; ex-negotiator.

THE LAST SAY OF ALL

One presumes they mean it when they say they care more about our land than their rotten old election!



HA!

NEXT WEEK

NORMAN GOES FOR THE JUGULAR!